(a) whether any request from the Government of Andhra Pradesh has been received in the Ministry for change of coal linkage of Rayalseema Thermal Power Project Stage-II from Mahanadi Coal Fields to Singarauli Collieries;

(b) if so. when such request was received in the Ministry; and

(c) the steps taken on the request?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A request from Energy Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh for change of source of long term coal linkage of 2.08 mt granted by Standing Linkage Committee (Long Term) for Rayalseema Thermal Power Plant (RTPP) Stage-II from Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) to Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) had been received in the Department of Coal in August, 2002. The matter has been examined in consultation with MCL and SCCL. Their views will be put up to Standing Linkage Committee (Long Term) in its next meeting for a decision in the matter.

Commercial exploitation of coal ash

2102. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after gradation of coal from mines a large quality of waste coal ash is dumped in the ground as useless;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to use this coal ash for commercial exploitation by selling to brick klin industry; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Gradation of coal is done on annual basis for ROM/STEAM/SLACK/Processed ROM sizes by coal companies after approval of Coal Controller for the production to be made from working/workable seams of mines. Coal produced and so graded are supplied to different consumers. Coal value realised is based on analysed grade of supplies to core sector consumers through sampling/analysis. No coal from production is, therefore, considered as waste coal ash for dumping in the ground as useless. Even in case of non-core sector without sampling facility there is nothing like waste coal ash.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

Consumption of Gold in the country

†2103. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the year-wise consumption of gold assessed in the country;

(b) the quantity of gold produced in the country to meet the requirement last year and quantity imported during last three years;

(c) the details of the measures taken to increase the production of gold; and

(d) the details of the measures taken to reduce the gap between demand and supply of gold?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) There are no firm estimates of usage of gold in the country. However very rough estimates suggest that usage of gold in India is about 600 tonnes per annum.

(b) The total indigenous production of gold including recovery as by product during 2001-02 was 10,251 Kg. The quantity of gold imported during the last three years is given below in the following table:

(In tonnes)

Year	
1999-2000	558.91
2000-2001	583.72
2001-2002	488.358

(c) The possibility of increasing the production of gold from the existing mines of gold depends on the economic feasibility of ores contained in the mines. Reconnaissance Permits/Prospecting Licences have been granted for exploration of gold which may result in find of new gold deposits and eventual extraction of gold from the ore.

(d) Government has been adopting a liberal import policy for gold with a view to reducing the gap between demand and supply of gold. The import of gold is allowed under Non Resident Indian and free baggage schemes.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.